

Citizen Input During Budget Process Vital to Mayor and Council

The City of Rockville’s annual budget process is underway, and the Mayor and Council need input from City residents throughout the next few months to make it a success.

“The Mayor and Council were elected to represent the residents of Rockville,” said Councilmember Bob Wright. “We strive to reflect the desires and needs of our residents, but we’re not perfect in that effort. When our residents let us know their opinions, we’re more informed and more apt to make decisions that benefit Rockville.”

During the budget process, many of the new projects to be tackled by the City are introduced and choices are made on funding and scheduling. In addition, recommendations for adjustments to projects that have been included in the six-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) are made at this time. By giving their input, citizens can play a crucial role in establishing the City’s priorities for the future.

The CIP is a preview of what new infrastructure and improvements to infrastructure the City anticipates and in what time frame it expects them to occur. These can be as ordinary as water plant improvements and storm water management facilities or as exciting as a new recreation center.

“During the budget process, we want to hear from citizens as it lets us know whether they concur with the plan,” explained Wright. “Do they agree with our priorities? Are there better alternative projects?”

“We strive to reflect the desires and needs of our residents, but we’re not perfect in that effort. When our residents let us know their opinions, we’re more informed and more apt to make decisions that benefit Rockville.”

Public involvement is essential to developing projects that meet public needs in a manner that is sensitive to citizen and neighborhood concerns. Most projects are upgrades to roads, storm water management, and parks. Many of these are created to address neighborhood concerns. The Mayor and Council pay careful attention to this input when making their decisions on what projects to fund.

Neighborhood associations that are interested in submitting projects for inclusion in the proposed Fiscal Year 2001 budget may do so until Feb. 11. Throughout the spring, members of the City staff will be available to attend community meetings to discuss any project included in the CIP. Also, a budget page will be created on Rockville’s Web site (www.ci.rockville.md.us) with important dates and brief descriptions of City projects.

Rockville’s Mayor and Council will make the final decisions on funding for projects in late May, following two Budget Public Hearings (see the box at the top right for all the important budget dates). All public meetings are open to the public and take place in the Mayor and Council Chambers at Rockville City Hall, 111 Maryland Ave. The meetings begin at 7:30 p.m.

“The operating budget establishes the scope of service we expect to deliver to residents,” said Wright. “We always strive for the highest level of service delivery, but the extent or scope of a particular service also is a choice. We need citizen input to know whether we have too many or not enough police officers, neighborhood services, etc.”

For more information on how you can give your input during this year’s budget process, call Bo Ferguson, Rockville’s Project Implementation Coordinator, at 301-315-7507.

Budget Dates to Remember

Feb. 1	Outside agency requests due
Feb. 11	Deadline for community associations to recomend projects for inclusion in the proposed budget document
Feb. 22	Mayor and Council Work Session for budget issues
March 7	Outside agency recommendations finalized and City Manager makes final decision on proposed budget and capital improvements projects
March 14	Mayor and Council Work Session to review final budget decisions
April 25	Proposed budget presentation to Mayor and Council
April 26	Proposed budget available to citizens, organizations libraries, and staff
May 1	Budget Public Hearing #1
May 8	Budget Public Hearing #2
May 16	Budget Work Session #1
May 23	Budget Work Session #2
June 5	Budget to be adopted by Mayor and Council
Sept. 8	Adopted budget available to citizens, organizations, libraries, and staff

All meetings are open to the public and take place in the Mayor and Council Chambers at City Hall beginning at 7:30 p.m.

Rockville Hires New Project Implementation Coordinator



Bo Ferguson,
Rockville's new Project Implementation Coordinator

The City of Rockville has hired Bo Ferguson as its new Project Implementation Coordinator (PIC). He began work for the City on Jan. 3 and replaced Ken Hartman, who left to take a position with the County. Ferguson’s duties include working on all of the City’s Capital Improvement Program projects to ensure that the public is involved and informed.

“I’m really looking forward to working with Rockville’s citizens,” said Ferguson. “The City has a lot of interesting projects coming on line in the next few years, and I want to make sure the community is an integrated part of those projects.”

Ferguson comes to Rockville from the City of Greenbelt, Md., where he served as the City’s Senior Management Analyst for more than three years. In that capacity, he worked on a variety of special projects for the City Manager and frequently worked with citizens to ensure their inclusion in them. Ferguson received his bachelor’s degree from Furman University in Greenville, SC, and his master’s of Public Administration from the University of Kansas.

Ferguson will work out of the City Manager’s Office and can be reached at bferguson@ci.rockville.md.us or by calling 301-315-7507.

City Projects

Recreation and Parks

East Rockville

Grandin Park

Creating a neighborhood park • 99 percent complete

Hungerford/Stoneridge

Elwood Smith Community Center

General renovations, accessibility upgrades, and room added • design underway with citizen input • construction in summer '00

Dawson Farm Park

Adding Ritchie Pkwy. dead-end • includes picnic area, historical marker, and artwork • design in winter '00 • construction in winter/spring '00

Lincoln Park

Community Center

Renovations and adding space • will house computer center and a police substation • construction underway with completion in spring '00

Isreal Park Ballfield

Improvements to ballfield drainage • construction in spring '00

King Farm

King Farm Park/Elementary School

Park concept plan completed with ballfields, playgrounds, pathways, passive space, and tennis and basketball courts • construction in spring '00

Potomac Woods/Horizon Hill

Millennium Trail

Proposed bikeway along Wootton Pkwy. from Falls Rd. to Glen Mill Rd. • survey and design underway

Falls Rd.

Bike trail on Wootton Pkwy. to Dunster Rd. • east side • construction in winter/spring '00

West End

Skate Park

At Welsh Park • ramps, quarter

pipes, etc. for in-liners, skateboarders, and bikes • input sought • construction in spring '00

General Projects

Montrose Community Center

General renovations, accessibility upgrades, and roof replacement • design in winter/spring '00 • construction in fall/winter '00/'01

City-Wide Bicycle Route System

First year construction of paths, lanes, and routes • construction in '00 • detailed design in cooperation with Citizen Bicycle Action Committee

Senior Center

Renovate kitchen and other interior areas in '00

Nature Center

To be located at Civic Center Park near Old Avery Rd. meadow area • design ongoing with citizen taskforce • construction in spring '00

Dogwood Park Field

Lights replaced with fixtures that concentrate light on the lower and upper baseball/football field

Playground Equipment/Fit Trail

Playground equipment replaced • Woottons Mill Park (adjacent to Aintree Dr.), Glenora Park, and Twinbrook Park

Mark Twain Athletic Park

Lighted soccer and softball fields, tennis courts, and playground • first use in spring '00

Glenview Mansion Historic Master Plan

Preserving historic integrity of mansion and grounds • in cooperation with Recreation and Park Advisory Board, Cultural Arts Commission, Historic District Commission, docents, and residents

City Hall Expansion

Expand office space at 111 Maryland Ave. • Study in Fiscal Year (FY) '00, with construction in FY '01-'02

CALL 301-309-3330 FOR MORE INFO



Twinbrook Community Recreation Center is Up and Running!

The Twinbrook Community Recreation Center has officially completed its first two and a half months of operation with great success.

In December, the center's fitness room had 477 visitors, the computer lab had 543 visitors, and the gym had 1,513 visitors. At this point, there are 84 adult fitness members, 21 senior fitness members, 362 center members, and 410 people have paid daily drop in fees.

Center members enjoy free special events. For example, the center will throw a Superbowl Bash for school-age children. During the event, kids will make their own jerseys and penants, play games, and enjoy refreshments.

In addition, the center is available for rental for small parties of up to 40 people. Room set-up and take-down are included.

The center hours are 6 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-10 p.m. on Saturdays, and 9 a.m.-10 p.m. on Sundays.

Call 301-315-5760 for more information about the Twinbrook Community Recreation Center.

City Projects

Public Works

City Makes Improvements to Great Falls Road

Over the next two years, the City of Rockville will redesign Great Falls Rd., from Monument St. to West Montgomery Ave., to improve drainage, pedestrian and bike accessibility, and vehicular safety.

This portion of the road will be upgraded to City standards, including upgrading the curbs and gutters and, in some sections, widening street lanes. In addition, the current asphalt sidewalk will be replaced with a four-foot concrete sidewalk. On the other side of the street, a new bike path will be built.

City and State staff members have been working with residents living on Great Falls Rd. (and the adjacent streets) to refine the design of the improvements to minimize the impact on each property owner.

The final product will create a safer environment for school children accessing Julius West Middle School; improve drainage throughout the area; increase vehicular safety; and include a portion of the Bikeway Master Plan.

For more information, call the Public Works Department at 301-309-3220.

Rockville Upgrades City Water Plant

Recently, the City of Rockville made extensive upgrades to its water treatment plant to modernize the facility and expand its capacity. New and tougher federal and state environmental mandates required the City to make these upgrades. The Department of Public Works Environmental Engineering and Contract Management Divisions supervised the design and construction of this extensive capital improvement project.

First put into use in 1958, the plant now produces an average of 5.3 million gallons of water per day to meet the demands of customers. On a hot summer day, that production level can soar to eight million gallons. All this production meant that in addition to meeting environmental standards, the City needed to replace worn out mechanical devices such as the large pumps that pump the water 5.7 miles from the Potomac River to Rockville.

In addition a system that consolidates the leftover solids that are removed from the raw (untreated) water was added. In the past, these solids were discharged back into the Potomac (from where they originated). However, in compliance with federal mandates, these compressed solids are now transported away from the plant and not discharged into the river.

Other work included refurbishing the City's intake structure which draws water from the Potomac River. This structure, located on the C&O Canal on Bealls Island, received three new pumps in 1999. The pumps were raised above the 100-year flood elevation of the river. Previously, the intake structure was subject to periodic flooding.

Currently, the plant's clarifier, the part of the system that helps remove the solids from the water, is under construction. Other projects that are on the horizon include filter upgrades, water plant pump replacements, and improvements to Sandy Landing Rd. (the road leading to the plant).

At this time, the City has spent approximately \$5 million on the project, and it expects to spend an additional \$1.5 million to complete the modernization and expansion needs and to address environmental compliance requirements. The Public Works' Environmental Engineering Division and the Finance Department have obtained \$4.6 million worth of low interest loans to defray the cost of the work.

East Rockville

Horners Lane Water Tank

Remove tank spring '00 • work with neighborhoods to determine use of the land

Hungerford/Stoneridge

Cabin John Relief Sewer

Considering options to increase capacity of parts of the old, undersized sanitary sewage pipe running from Town Center through the Hungerford/Stoneridge neighborhood • community input sought • private consultant hired to review alternatives

Mt. Vernon Storm Water Management Pond

Located at Mt. Vernon Pl., east of Blandford St. • to improve the condition of the Upper Cabin John Creek by modifying the existing pond • will include new wet marsh • start date to be announced • awaiting County School District input on land easement

Lincoln Park

Ashley Avenue

To improve localized drainage issues on residential lots • must obtain 40 percent resident participation • approximate start in summer '00

West End

Great Falls Rd.

Improve safety and appearance from Monument St. to W. Montgomery Ave. • design by State Highway underway • right-of-way acquisition in spring '00

Falls Road Sidewalk/Bikeway

Proposed bikeway from Wootton Pkwy. to Dunster Lane • survey and design underway • community meeting in January '00

General Projects

Water Main Relining

Denham Rd., Edmonston Rd., and Rollins Ave. completed • future project located at Great Falls Rd. • improve flow and pressure • approximate start in July '00 • temporary significant impact to streets and driveways

Tower Oaks/I-270 Traffic Signal

New traffic signal operational in Febru-

ary • other projects: installing pedestrian signals; pedestrian push buttons and crosswalks at the western and southern approaches of intersection; and modifying median at western approach to accommodate the left-turn movement off ramp

Avery Rd. Right Turn Lane

Improve capacity and safety at intersection • install sidewalk/bikeway • approximate start in spring '00

Street Geometric Improvements

Improve safety and appearance of street • upcoming projects include a median on Halpine Rd. and Rothgeb Dr. (reconfiguration) • approximate start in spring '00

West Gude Dr. Right Turn Lane

Improve capacity and safety at intersection • construction underway, with completion in March '00

Asphalt Maintenance

Approximate start in July '00, with completion in September '00 • large portion of work will be in the area west of U.S. Interstate 270

Veirs Drive Sidewalk

Improve pedestrian safety and provide sidewalk on north side • start in spring '00

Highland Avenue

Improve street with turn-around, storm drain, and asphalt paving • survey and design in January and February '00 • construction to begin in May '00

Neighborhood Traffic Control

Upcoming speed hump projects pending neighborhood approval: Claggett Dr. and Mt. Vernon Pl. • approximate start in spring

Street Lighting

Projects include McCormick Dr. and the Glenora Lane pedestrian path • installing decorative streetlights along South Washington St. within the historic district

Thomas Farm Wastewater Pump Station

Part of the Thomas Farm development • will be located at the southeast corner of the development • will connect to the King Farm pump-around system

CALL 301-309-3220 FOR MORE INFO

King Farm Park/ Elementary School Safeguards Green Space

In a continuing effort to safeguard and enhance green space in the city, the Mayor and Council of Rockville and City residents have been working together to create the design for the new King Farm Park/Elementary School. That design is now near completion, and work on the park is projected to begin this spring.

“The design is not quite finalized, although it is close,” said Burt Hall, Director of Recreation and Parks. “We expect to put the finishing touches on the proposed design, and then schedule a meeting with residents for one last look.”

- The proposed final design will include:
- Two playgrounds (one for 2-5 year olds and one for 5-12 year olds)
 - Two softball fields
 - One soccer field
 - Two lighted tennis courts
 - A picnic area in a natural setting
 - Pathways
 - Multi-use pedestrian/bike paths
 - Park benches
 - Landscaping
 - A bathroom/storage building (to be removed when the school is built)

Rockville’s Art Division also is working with the Cultural Arts Commission to select artwork to be placed in the park as part of the City’s Art in Public Places program. King Farm residents will have the opportunity to participate in the selection process.

The City invited King Farm residents to a meeting last July at which the proposed design was presented by City staff and consultants. Thirty-five King Farm residents and representatives of the developer attended. The input gathered at that meeting has been incorporated into the park design.

Construction on the park is expected to take approximately six to eight months to complete. Grass areas and landscaping will take up to a year to mature.

The future school will be located in the northwest quadrant of the park, and that space will be left as open lawn until the Montgomery County Public School system builds the school. The required 80-space parking lot will be positioned on the west side of the site and will be built along with the school. The parking lot area will serve as a staging area for the school construction.

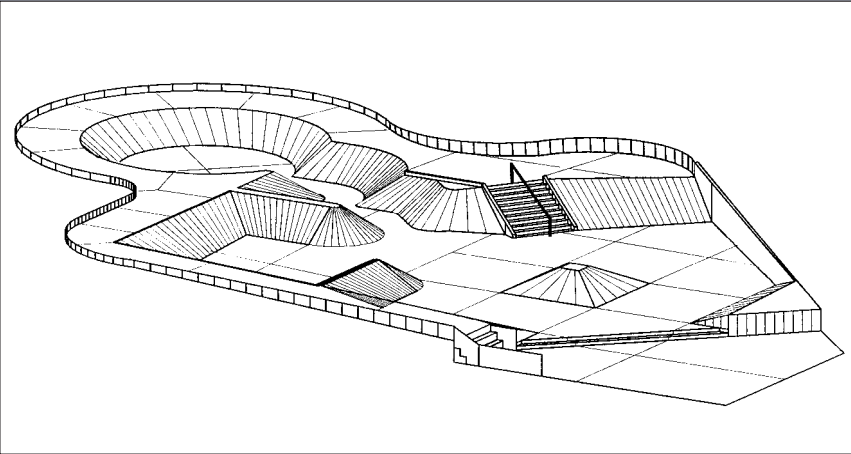
For more information about the new park, call the Recreation and Parks Department at 301-309-3330.

Plans for Skate Park at Welsh Park Continue

The design phase of Rockville’s new Skate Park at Welsh Park is nearing completion, and construction is scheduled to begin in March. The park, created as part of the Mayor and Council’s youth initiative, is expected to open for use this summer.

When completed the park will include ramps, rails, bowls, and practice skate areas, and will provide a safe and challenging facility for skaters. It also will provide them with a first-class venue to learn and hone their skating skills.

Over the last several months, approximately 40 skaters and 12 adults assisted the City in making design decisions concerning the park.



An artist’s rendering of a similar skate park built by the City’s contractor in Kitsap, Wash. Rockville’s new skate park, located at Welsh Park, will include many of the same features.

Nature Center Construction to Start in Spring

The design of the new Nature Center, which will be located at Rockville Civic Center Park near the Old Avery Rd. meadow, is ongoing with a citizen taskforce offering input. Construction is estimated to begin this spring.

The center will be home to exhibits and interactive displays that represent the beauty and challenges associated with nature and wildlife in an urban environment.



A computer automated design rendering of the new Nature Center.

Lincoln Park Learning and Resource Center Nears Completion

Neighborhoods and youth continue to be priorities of Rockville’s Mayor and Council, and the new Lincoln Park Learning and Resource Center will benefit both.

With completion expected by late spring, the center will house a learning and resource center with a bank of 10 to 12 computers, a new pre-school room, a game room, a public safety substation, and a fitness center with all new equipment.

At the new center, computer classes and workshops will be offered, and the computers will be available to the public for homework, research, tutorials, and Internet access.

The center came about as a result of the hard work of the Lincoln Park Learning and Resource Center Committee, the Lincoln Park Civic Association, and the Lincoln Park Historical Society. Many of the items included in the center are reflections of the input voiced by the many residents involved in this project.

A grand opening for the Lincoln Park Learning and Resource Center is planned for late spring. Read *Rockville Reports* for the date and time of the event.

For more information, call the Recreation and Parks Department at 301-309-3330.

Mark Twain School Athletic Park Scheduled to Open in April

Rockville’s new Mark Twain School Athletic Park is slated to open for league play on April 24, with a formal dedication to take place sometime that same month.

The athletic park, which is located on the grounds of Mark Twain School, is a lighted soccer/softball complex, which will be home to the City’s softball, baseball, and soccer leagues and other recreational programs. In addition to the athletic fields, it includes an unlighted tennis court, a playground, a picnic area, and a small activity building that houses a shelter, vending machines, and restrooms. Eventually, the park also will contain art as part of Rockville’s Arts in Public Places program.

“With this complex, we’ll now have a place where girl’s softball teams can play under the lights,” explained Chuck Miller, Rockville’s Sports Programs Supervisor. “It also gives the City its first official-size soccer field so that we can offer residents adult soccer league play.”

The need for the new park was realized as participation in soccer, both league and drop-in play, increased in the city. In addition, previously, women’s and co-recreational softball leagues were restricted to only one night of play per week during the season. This new facility will allow for field time on multiple nights.

The location of the park is ideal for these uses because of its central location, said Miller. It is surrounded by Montgomery County Public School facilities, Rock Creek Park, RedGate Golf Course, and Rockville’s Civic Center Park.

For more information about the new Mark Twain Athletic Park or about softball or soccer league play, call 301-309-3340.